31 March 2005

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Second Committee
Fifty-ninth session

Text submitted by the Chairman on the basis of informal consultations

Revitalization of the work of the Second Committee

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 58/126 of 19 December 2003 and 58/316 of 1 July 2004 on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, the Second Committee:

(a) Approves the text related to its work contained in the annex to the present document;

(b) Acknowledges that Member States could consider continuing the discussions on issues relevant to the review of the agenda and methods of work of the Second Committee with a view to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Committee, in line with ongoing General Assembly revitalization.

05-29154 (E)

Annex

Working methods of the Second Committee

1. Efforts to enhance the work of the Second Committee should be combined with the objective of reaching consensus, which has traditionally been the guiding principle of its work. In efforts to reform the Committee's methods of work it is important that the quality of the resolutions adopted be preserved. The final outcomes need to be meaningful and add value to the issues under consideration. Discussions and events that are linked to the work of the Committee should contribute to a broader understanding and consideration of the issues and thereby could enrich the work of the Committee. It is suggested that the practice be maintained of allocating enough time, after the formal consideration of each cluster of the programme of work, to allow delegations to engage in negotiations, if required, in order to approve the draft resolutions on a rolling basis. The presentation on time of draft resolutions is fundamental to the effective work of the Committee. However, delegations may need more time to finish negotiations. The commitment to present draft resolutions and complete negotiations by the deadlines should be respected. In this spirit, it is proposed that:

(a) If required, more time be allocated for negotiations after the formal consideration of a cluster;

(b) In the organization of work, different dates be fixed to adopt resolutions.

2. If the need arises, and within existing resources, prior to the adoption of draft resolutions the Chairman may wish to schedule formal informals.

3. In order to ensure the timely consideration of the sub-items in the "Macroeconomic policy questions" cluster, and on the basis of the results of prior consultations by the Chairman of the Second Committee with the representatives of Member States in the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Trade and Development Board, the Committee requests the Committee on Conferences to consider advancing the timing of the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board meeting so that its report is available by the middle of September.

4. The long-standing practice of inviting, within existing resources, key speakers and organizing panels and round tables should be maintained. The Secretariat should continue to consult well in advance with the Bureau about the preparations for such events so that they can be brought to the attention of Member States at the beginning of the session of the Committee. Care must be taken not to overload the programme of work of the Committee. The timing of these activities should place them in proximity to the substantive discussion of the relevant agenda items in order to contribute to a broader understanding and consideration of those agenda items. Attention should also be given to the increasing role of side events organized by Member States that are related to the agenda of the Committee and that would attract the participation of the members of the Committee. Member States might consider informing the Secretariat and the Bureau of their intention in this respect so that time can be set aside for these events.

5. It is necessary to ensure that documentation is available in accordance with the six-week rule for the distribution of documents simultaneously in the six official languages of the General Assembly (see resolution 55/222).

6. Delegations should try to benefit in full from the question-and-answer time by having at least 30 to 45 minutes of discussion with the officials responsible for the preparation and presentation of the reports. Officials should be well prepared to give answers to the questions posed to them, and delegations could use this time to express views on the issues under discussion.

7. Member States could evaluate the possibility of using the consideration of agenda items as an opportunity to exchange lessons learned and highlight their own experiences in addition to stating their national positions. In any case, efforts should be made to respect the time limits established for statements.

8. Every effort should be made to reach consensus in a timely fashion. Enough time should be allocated for the drafting of forward-looking resolutions that reflect current trends and realities.

9. Resolutions should be concise and action-oriented, and the Committee should observe the provisions of the General Assembly resolutions in this regard, in particular resolution 57/270 B.

10. In order to facilitate the monitoring of the implementation of resolutions, reports should focus on implementation by the various actors addressed in the resolutions. Special emphasis should be placed on implementation by the United Nations system.